GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:519
ANSWERED ON:22.11.2000
FLOOD CONTROL
NITISH SENGUPTA

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether West Bengal faced catastrophic floods during the month of September, 2000;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether said catastrophic floods can be prevented by the Government of West Bengal and D.V.C. by forecasting of floods;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken/propose to be taken to prevent the resurrection of such catastrophic flood?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SMT. BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) West Bengal faced a very grim flood situation in the districts of Birbhum, Murshidabad, Nadia and 24 Parganas (North) in September, 2000. This was due to very heavy rainfall both in quantity and intensity never recorded before. Between 18th to 23rd September, 2000, the total rainfall in Ajoy Basin was 1040 mm, in Mayurakshi Catchment was 1224 mm and in the Damodar Basin 529 mm. The Bhagirathi basin was overflooded as it received discharges from its tributaries many times more than its carrying capacity. The embankment of all rivers breached by over-topping. The details of devastation are as follows:-

i)	Total area affected	:	23971 sq.km.
ii)	Crop area affected	:	19200 sq.km.
iii)	Population affected	:	218 lakhs
iv)	Loss of human lives	:	1320 nos.
v)	No. of missing persons	:	154 nos.
vi)	No. of houses damaged	:	21.94 lakhs.
vii)	No. of blocks affected	:	117 nos.
viii)	No. of Municipality affected	:	68

(c) & (d) Flood forecasting cannot prevent floods, but helps in mitigating the flood damage potential. Central Water Commission issues flood forecasts and flood inflow pattern forecasts to the State Governments and concerned agencies from time to time and regular flood warnings are issued from offices located in the D.V.C. system and other barrages. The District Administration makes elaborate arrangement of communication to different block offices which are likely to be affected by flood water passing through these areas.

(e) Flood caused by rainfall of such high intensity in a short span of time as during the current year is difficult to predict and prevent. In order to mitigate the sufferings of the flood victims, the State Government has taken up a programme of construction of flood shelters in flood prone areas.